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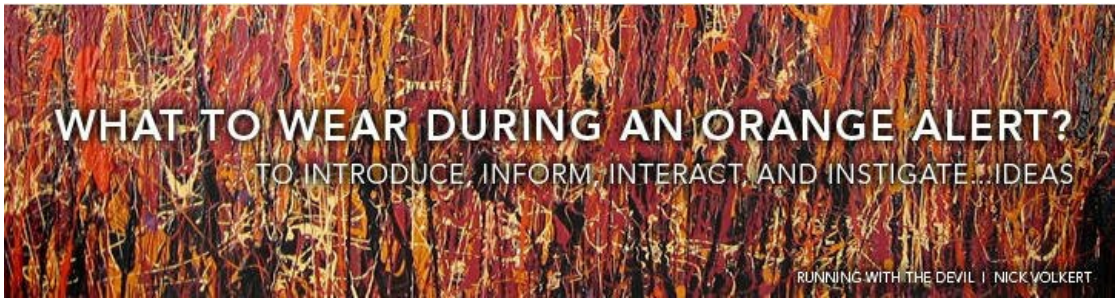

wednesday, october 03, 2007

Artist of the Week

Jenny Kanzler

If you dig deep enough into a fond memory, or a dream, or a childhood photo you may find something slightly darker. Not something that is necessarily violent or traumatic, but more objects or events that left you feeling somewhat uncomfortable. Was it your grandma's dusty wigs, an old appliance in the basement, or that head cheese or pimento loaf left out on the counter? Whatever it might have been that object or occurrence brought forth fear or confusion or ultimately anxiety.
What makes the work of Philadelphia resident Jenny Kanzler so unique is she will actually dwell, for a minute or two, on your worst memories, and then recreate them. It is that intense mixture of nostalgia and fear that draws the viewer in, but also pushes him/her away at the same time. She paints memories, mangled, distorted and perhaps unsettling, but these memories have equally importance to the memories we choose to focus on in our daily lives.

Having graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art with a MFA in painting a mere two years, Jenny has already participated in a couple solo show and several group shows. Her most group show, "I Can't Remember", opens October 19th at the Little Berlin Gallery in Philadelphia. Earlier this year Jenny was nominated for the 2007 Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Award.

Recently, Jenny took some time out to answer a few of our questions about her work and Philadelphia scene in general.

Orange Alert (OA): How would you describe your work?
Jenny Kanzler (JK): Symbols for anxiety, fear, loneliness and loss or metaphors for invasion, like illness, infection, and infestation -- generally, preoccupations of nightmares. Many of my paintings focus on the struggle between empathy and disgust and the relationship of the viewer to the object or conflict. They present things that did happen, altered through a faulty memory, simplified to isolate some specific occurrence, embellished, rewritten and presented as some new story connected to the original only in essence. They are narratives, employing realism and storytelling to represent an idea.

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words of the week

I know nothing about war
and those hearts built out of spent matchsticks
belong to those who dream in flames

- Joshua Michael Stewart from *Vintage Gray*

picture of the week

Steven Bossler "Untitled"

songs of the week

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OA: You seem to have a very interesting and at times dark subject matter, where do you draw your inspiration from?
JK: The Velveteen Rabbit (William Nicholson illustrations), the Twilight Zone, David Lynch (especially the Elephant Man and Eraserhead), Bluebeard, the Brother's Quay, Francisco Goya, Francis Bacon, Hans Holbein the Younger, Diego Velazquez, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, A Nightmare on Elmstreet, the Changeling, Rosemary's Baby, the Little Girl who Lived Down the Lane, Saturday matinee movies, the playground - the girl who pretended to be a horse, the day Brian Flaherty and I threw up in the lunchroom, Aldus Huxley's Heaven and Hell, Freud's essay on the uncanny, my German grandmother, my beau Abe, my family and friends and the many strange and interesting things that they say, people I don't know who sleep on the subway, the naked man at the end of the alley and all kinds of other surprising occurrences that a person might witness walking around Philadelphia at any time of day or night.

OA: I've noticed a lot of reoccurring colors in your work, do you have a set color palette? What is your intention in using these specific colors?
JK: The colors I use are burnt umber, raw sienna, raw umber, cadmium yellow, cadmium red, cerulean blue, ultramarine blue, alizarin crimson, and titanium white. Generally, I underpaint in earth tones, and then as the image develops incorporate more color. Since the development of the image interests me, I try not to hide everything that's happened. Lately, I've been inserting jewel tones and placing them in contrast to muddy colors, presenting a clean/dirty conflict that relates to the empathy/disgust conflict.
OA: Earlier this year you participated in a solo show entitled "Creepy Sweet". In my opinion that really describes your work, a little creepy, but sweet and nostalgic. It's familiar, but uncomfortable at the same time. What is the intended purpose of presenting these images and what are some of the reactions that you have received?
JK: When others describe the work as familiar, as you just did, or say that it reminds them of something that happened to them, and then they tell me some personal story, or if they laugh, those are the best reactions. Occasionally I completely horrify people, and then we're all upset and disturbed. The goal of connecting with others through an investigation of the human condition is lost. I worry that I have misjudged my audience and that my insertion has a negative impact on others. There's also an embarrassment component. It's as if I've said *you know how sauerkraut smells awful but it tastes so good and it's almost as if the reason that it's so good is that it smells so bad, it's like it's the contrast or something*...and the other person replies *no -- sauerkraut is disgusting*.

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Songs 1/24 to 1/30

submissions

If you are a musician, writer, or artist and would like to see your work presented or reviewed here, we would love to hear from you. You can send submissions to P.O. Box 3897, St. Charles, IL 60174 or contact us at orangealert31 [AT] gmail.com. Thanks!

my week in pictures

We talk with local artist Kari Karus about her work and her involvment with Water Street Studio.

We discuss Quickies! (her monthly reading series) and Theodore Huxtable with Mary Hamilton

We explore the layers of sound contained in the work of Benoit Pioulard.

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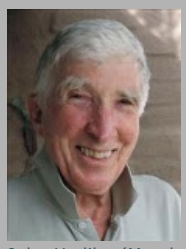
OA: I have noticed a lot of great work coming out of Philly lately. How would describe the current scene in Philly?
JK: To me it seems small enough to be manageable but large enough to be interesting. My recent favorites are Hiro Sakaguchi at Seraphin Gallery, and Mark Shetabi at the Tower Gallery. Longtime favorites are local heroes Edna Andrade, Thomas Chimes and Sydney Goodman.

Second Thursday at the Crane building is never disappointing. The building was formerly a bathroom fixture factory, which is now converted into artists' studios and galleries including Inliquid, Nexus, the Icebox, and Kelly Webber Fine Art (formerly 201 gallery where I had the "Creepy Sweet" show). There's a refreshing enthusiasm in the gallery owners. They present what interests them and take chances with younger, lesser-known artists. Plus, second Thursday visitors are greeted by a generous offering of food and alcohol.

OA: What's next for Jenny Kanzler?
JK: Other than making a Halloween costume?
From October 8th – November 6th, I'll have several paintings on view in the "Window on Broad" adjacent to the Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery, near the northeast intersection of Broad and Pine, Center City Philadelphia.
October 19th – November 9th, i cannot remember, a four-person show of sculpture, video, and drawings with fellow artists and friends: Alison Nastasi (who curated the show), Theresa Rose and Mariya Dimov at little berlin gallery, 1801 N. Howard Street, near the intersection of 2nd and Montgomery in Fishtown, Philadelphia. Opening reception: October 19th from 6:00 – 10:00 PM with a performance by MFM.
February 1st – 28th
Solo show of painting, drawing and sculpture at the Elliott Center Gallery at The University of North Carolina in Greensboro. Opening reception: February 4th, 5:30 – 7:30 PM.

Bonus Questions:
OA: Coffee? If yes what is your favorite type of coffee and where is you favorite coffee spot?
JK: Anything dark with a little cinnamon. Sanka does not offend me. My couch or the kitchen table, or at the park on an overcast day.

The Orange Alert Reading Series @ The Whistler Jan 18th: Chris Bower, Jill Summers, Nick Ostdick, and Scott Stealey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OA: Do you listen to music while you paint? Who are some of your favorite musicians you like to listen to while painting and in general?
JK: Music that I will never get sick of:
The soundtrack from Until the End of the World
Neko Case, especially Blacklisted
The Cocteau Twins
Leadbelly
David Bowie

Music that I may get sick of, but I really like right now:
Cat Power
Depeche Mode
Jenny Lewis and the Watson Twins
Coldplay
His Name is Alive

Music I should probably never admit that I like:
Big Audio Dynamite

For more information on Jenny Kanzler please visit her website.
posted by jason at 7:19 am
labels: artist of the week

4 comments:

robert said...

This IS Philly's next great artist.

12:00 PM

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4:42 AM

daniela said...

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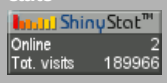

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